

VINTAGE EMULATION
Flutter, saturation, noise and more

FX
Mellotron V has four effects 'pedal' slots and 12 modules

FUNCTIONS
Five 16-stage MSEGs for deep modulation

OSCILLATORS
Synthi V's signal flow starts with three oscs

JOYSTICK PATH
Animate Synthi V's joystick by drawing or randomising

PIN MATRIX
Click pins in to make routings and mod assignments

TAPE MIX
Mix between three separate tapes or hear all at once

SAMPLE IMPORT
Load your own sounds into Mellotron V

MACROS
Take immediate control of CZ V with these sliders

WAVEFORMS
Go beyond the eight preset waveforms by drawing your own

ENVELOPES
Eight versatile envelopes change the CZ game



Arturia V Collection 7 €499

Three more historically significant new entrants take this ever-expanding suite of virtual vintage synths and keys to the next level

> The release of a new V Collection update is always something for classic synth and keyboard enthusiasts to get excited about, and version 7 adds three more classic emulations to a line-up that already takes in a what's-what of legends by Moog, Roland, Yamaha, Buchla and many others, bringing the total number of instruments to 24. It also makes improvements to B-3 V and Analog Lab – see *Lab report*.

The newcomers, then, comprise Mellotron V, Synthi V and CZ V (VST/AU/AAX/Standalone), putting Arturia's TAE (True Analog Emulation) and Phi (Physical Modelling) algorithms to work on recreating the tape-playing keyboard made so famous by The Beatles et al, EMS' revered 'briefcase modular', and a hybrid of Casio's CZ-101 and CZ-1000 phase distortion synths. As ever, each one can be had for €199, but dropping the full €499 on the whole lot is clearly the better option if you can stretch to it. After all, we praised V Collection 6's pricing in *cm254's* 10/10

review, and the tag hasn't increased since then, despite the new additions.

Mello' fellow

Mellotron V features all 65 original eight-second-long Mellotron tapes (flutes, strings, brass, choir, etc) and not only enables editing of them in terms of playback start/end points,

"The best thing about Mellotron V is the ability to import your own samples as 'tapes' via drag and drop"

ADSR envelope (not represented graphically, oddly), and even loop points for indefinite sustain, but also key-zoning and mixing of up to three tapes at once. Said mixing is of the linear 'A-through-B-through-C' kind, rather than an XY pad, so you can only really blend two of the three tapes at a time, or set all three to equal output with the 'All' setting, but it's a great performance tool, tied to mod wheel by default.

Sound shaping and hardware emulation come in the form of a global envelope, and the hugely evocative Flutter (velocity-modulatable), Tape Saturation, Mechanical Noise and Noise Floor parameters. Four stompbox-style effects inserts each load any of 12 modules including Delay, EQ, Chorus and Flanger; while Amp (Fender Twin or Leslie rotary) and Room simulation (nine reverbs) conclude the chain.

Perhaps the best thing about Mellotron V, though, is the ability to import your own samples as 'tapes' via drag and drop. All the

“The v7 equivalent to v6’s Buchla Easel V, Synthi V sits at the weirder end of the synthesis spectrum”

same functions and parameters are available as with the factory tapes, and you can elect to have them automatically timestretched when played up and down the keyboard, or not.

A perfectly realised and improved slice of sonic nostalgia, Mellotron sounds gorgeous and offers plenty of customisation of its own sounds, not to mention a brilliantly effective means by which to send your own samples back in time.

Synthi speaking

Launched in 1971 and probably best known for its associations with Pink Floyd and Jean-Michel Jarre, the EMS Synthi AKS was a portable modular three-oscillator monosynth that used a pin matrix for signal routing. Synthi V utterly transforms the original concept with four-voice polyphony, and a whole host of extras, via a pop-up panel at the top. Chief among these are five Function Generators (16-stage looping envelopes with curve shaping), a powerful step sequencer and dedicated LFO, and an editor for drawing joystick paths, all of which are assignable to every one of the synth’s controls via various mod matrices and menus. You also get three insert effects drawing on a roster of ten modules, and a nifty system for collectively modulating and offsetting the mod depths of up to four groups of pins.

V Collection 7’s equivalent to v6’s trippy Buchla Easel V, Synthi V sits very much at the weirder end of the synthesis spectrum. It excels at quintessentially ‘analogue’ burbling sequences and sci-fi FX, and is utterly engrossing (once you’ve got your head around the pin matrix).

Last but not least, CZ V riffs on Casio’s affordable range of 80s phase distortion instruments, with two synth ‘lines’, 32 voices of polyphony (including up to eight-voice unison) and an arpeggiator. It facilitates the free shaping of its tone-defining waveforms, and, of course, lays on the effects with four slots (configurable in series for both lines, or one two-slot path for



The well-established B-3 V Hammond organ emulation gets a whole new rack of effects pedals and modulation



Analog Lab 4 is ready for the gig with its new Concert mode and Stage view

Lab report

Also included in V Collection 7, Analog Lab 4 is the latest version of Arturia’s epic ‘compilation’ instrument, giving instant access to 6500 presets from the 23 other members of V Collection, with tagged browsing, 18 preassigned parameter controls, two simultaneous parts for stacking and layering and - new for v4 - onboard effects and a couple of organisational live performance features: Concert mode and Stage view. Available separately for €199, it might seem like a pointless inclusion in V Collection, since you’ve got all the synths and presets it exploits anyway, but Analog Lab’s ability to launch the full source synth patch for

any given sound at the click of a button actually proves handy for bringing them all together in a convenient one-stop interface. Version 4 also improves MIDI controller support, making it easier than before to map your keyboard’s knobs and faders to their onscreen counterparts; although owners of Arturia controllers still - unsurprisingly - win here, with such assignments made automatically.

The other two significant VC7 changes are an overhaul of the B-3 V Hammond emulation to include Mellotron V’s effects and a wicked modulation system; and 800 new presets for the existing instruments.

each) and nine processors. A full-on modulation system has been bolted on, too, adding to the expected per-line Pitch, DCW and Amp envelopes with two Mod envelopes, two LFOs, sample and hold, four front-panel macros and three maths-based sources. The envelopes can operate as ADSRs, 16-stage shapable MSEGs or the original eight-stage CZ design, and a 16-slot modulation matrix lets you assign all those sources and the usual MIDI suspects to absolutely anything, effects included.

CZ V successfully modernises Casio’s ‘quick and dirty synthesis’ concept without detracting from its original spirit - just the thing for forceful basses, leads and pads.

Victory V

Once again, there’s really nothing we can level at the latest V Collection in the way of criticism. The quality of all 24 instruments is simply astounding, and given that the price hasn’t risen since VC5, three years ago, there’s no arguing against the value proposition, either, which now amounts to just shy of €21 per synth. Achingly authentic yet empoweringly expansive, constantly inspirational, and almost endless in its musical utility, V Collection 7 is a synthesist’s dream come true. **cm**

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Alternatively

Native Instruments Komplete 12 NA » NA » £159-£1279

A staggeringly good collection of VSTi’s and effects, but not as focused on classic synths

Roland Cloud

NA » NA » Subscription

Get your mitts on a regularly added-to catalogue of flawlessly modelled Roland greats

Verdict

For Synthi V is awesome

Import samples into Mellotron V

CZ V is impressively edgy

You also get major updates to B-3 V and

Analog Lab, and 800 new presets

Exceptional value for money

Against Honestly, nothing

A trio of superb new instruments and a couple of major improvements make Arturia’s smorgasbord more essential still

10/10